

Guidelines on Intake and

Goal Setting

Arkansas Department of Career
Education

Adult Education Division

2010-2011

Guidelines on Intake and Goal Setting

Goal setting for the National Reporting System for Adult Education (NRS) is an integral part of the education process. Establishing goals not only helps define the specific areas in which instruction and learning is to be focused but also provides a benchmark by which programs and students can assess progress. NRS goals must be **realistic and attainable within the program year, between July 1 and June 30**.

The best time to initiate the process of goal setting is when the students first enter the program. During the intake process, students provide basic information to program personnel who fill out the Intake Form. After students take the required pre-test assessment, they should work with teachers or intake personnel to set goals.

Programs should have written procedures in place for orienting students to the program and helping them set goals that are both realistic and attainable within the program year. For example, students who are reading at very low educational levels should *not* have the goal of “Obtain a GED” or “Enter Postsecondary Education” recorded in AERIS. In the NRS framework, all students are assumed to have the goal of improving their basic literacy skills or English language skills. This assumed goal is the reason that all enrolled students are counted in the educational gain measure and reported in NRS Table 4.

Students often have many reasons or goals for attending adult literacy programs. Several of these reasons and goals have been defined by NRS and may be found and chosen in AERIS in the following places in a student’s file: “*Core Indicator – Primary or Secondary Goals*,” and also “*Secondary Reasons – Primary or Secondary*.”

In addition to the NRS measure of educational gain, there are four more outcome measures, also referred to as the “follow-up” goals: Entered Employment, Retained or Improved Employment, Receipt of a GED, and Placement in Postsecondary Education or Training.

The US Department of Education, Division of Adult Education and Literacy, wants each state to encourage adult learners to make successful transitions into employment and/or post-secondary education and training as long-term goals beyond the short-term goal of improving basic literacy or English language skills.

The implementation of data matching between the Arkansas Department of Career Education and the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services and the Arkansas Department of Higher Education has greatly reduced the workload of local programs which no longer need to conduct surveys to determine student achievement of most of these goals. The next section of this manual contains more information about Data Matching Procedures. When a student decides to choose one (or two) of these four follow-up goals as a primary (and secondary) goal, and these goals are realistic and attainable within the program year, the information needs to be recorded on the student’s Intake Form and reported in AERIS. Students should not choose the same goal as both a primary and a secondary goal (but it will not be counted twice).

Programs are required to meet 80% of the Core Indicators of Performance to be considered Effective and Efficient according to Adult Education Program Policies:
<http://ace.arkansas.gov/adult.html>.

All programs must use an intake form that is tied to the program database for collecting data. The *Arkansas Adult Education Reporting Information System Intake Form* was generated from the AERIS database and has been approved by the Adult Education Division. It is available in a bilingual Spanish/English version and both are included in the Appendix. Programs may not omit any items on the intake form, but they may add items that might be required by their local educational agency for data collection.

The next four sections, Core Outcome Measures #1 – #4, will cover the four follow-up goals in more detail.

Core Outcome Measure #1: Entered Employment

Definition: Learner obtains a job by the end of the first quarter* after exit quarter.**

* There are four quarters in a program year: July 1 – September 30, October 1 – December 31, January 1 – March 31, and April 1 – June 30.

** Exit quarter is the quarter when instruction ends, the learner terminates, or the learner has not received instruction for **90 days** and is not scheduled to receive further instruction (NRS Implementation Guidelines, 2007, page 29).

Applicable Population: Enrolled learners (with 12 or more contact hours) who are unemployed at time of entry, who have a primary or secondary goal of obtaining employment, and who exit during the program year.

Collection Procedure: At intake, the local program collects the individual learner's employment status (Unemployed, Employed, or Not in the Labor Force, see Appendix for definitions) and whether or not an employment goal is set. Entered employment is measured in the first quarter after program exit quarter by data matching procedures (see Reporting Procedure below). Note that a job obtained while the student is enrolled is not reported and recorded until the student actually exits the program and is separated in AERIS. Employment is defined as working in a paid, unsubsidized job, or working 15 hours or more per week in an unpaid job on a farm or business operated by a family member of the student. Please note the important difference in the definitions between "Unemployed" and "Not in the Labor Force" (see pages 10-11).

Reporting Procedure: The Arkansas Department of Career Education, Adult Education Division (ACE-AED) has a Memorandum of Understanding to match data with the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services (DWS, formerly Employment Services Department). ACE-AED will run a data match with DWS with the social security numbers of ACE-AED students who (1) had the goal of entering employment, (2) had

12 or more contact hours, and (3) exited the program. The data will be recorded and maintained in the Adult Education Division as aggregate numbers for each local program and the state as a whole. The data cannot be recorded under individual student records in AERIS because DWS does not release information on an individual student level. Local programs will be responsible for collecting accurate social security numbers in AERIS for the data match, recording students' goals at intake, recording students' attendance hours, and separating students when they leave the program or receive no services for 90 consecutive days and have no scheduled services. The employment goal data will be reported in NRS Table 5.

In special circumstances, local programs can manually record in AERIS the achievement of students' employment goals if the local program has documentation that the students have entered employment in the first quarter following their exit quarter and the information will not be captured through the state data matching process. Examples of this include students who work in a neighboring state, enter the military, work for an employer who does not report employment information to Arkansas DWS, or do not have or provide a Social Security Number. Students need to have had the goal of Enter Employment, had 12 or more contact hours, and exited the program. The data entry for an outcome achievement can only be completed after a student has been separated from the program in AERIS. The "AERIS Manual Outcome/Goal" form must be filled in by the program in detail and submitted to the AERIS Program Analyst at the Adult Education Division for final approval. A copy of the form must also be kept in the student's file. It is the program's responsibility to prove the student's employment will not be included in the state's data match or else the manually entered goal will not be approved.

Core Outcome Measure #2: Retained or Improved Employment

Definition: Learner remains employed in the third quarter after exit quarter.

Applicable Population: Enrolled learners who, at time of entry were not employed and had a primary or secondary goal of obtaining employment, and who entered employment by the first quarter after exit quarter; **and** enrolled learners who are employed at entry, who have a primary or secondary goal of improved or retained employment, and who exit during the program year.

Collection Procedure: For (1) unemployed students (with the goal of obtain a job) and who obtain a job by the end of the first quarter after the exit quarter, and (2) students who are employed at entry and had a goal of improve employment or retain employment, this outcome is measured in the third quarter after the student's exit quarter. Data will be obtained by data matching.

Reporting Procedure: The Arkansas Department of Career Education, Adult Education Division (ACE-AED) has a Memorandum of Understanding to match data

with the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services. ACE-AED will run a data match with DWS with the social security numbers of ACE-AED enrolled and exited students who had the goal of obtain a job and were successful in the first quarter after exit quarter; **and** enrolled, exited, and employed students who had the goal of retaining or improving employment. The data will be recorded and maintained in the Adult Education Division as aggregate numbers for each local program and the state as a whole. The data will not be recorded under individual student records in AERIS. The employment goal data will be reported in NRS Table 5.

In special circumstances, local programs can manually record in AERIS the achievement of students' employment goals if the local program has documentation that the student has retained or improved employment that will not be captured through data matching processes. Examples of this include students who work in a neighboring state or with an employer who does not report employment information to Arkansas DWS, or do not have or provide a Social Security Number. Students must have had the goal of Retain or Improve Employment, had 12 or more contact hours, and exited the program. The data entry for an outcome achievement can only be completed after a student has been separated from the program in AERIS. The "AERIS Manual Outcome/Goal" form must be filled in by the program in detail and submitted to the AERIS Program Analyst at the Adult Education Division for final approval. A copy of the form must also be kept in the student's file. It is the program's responsibility to prove the student's achievement will not be included in the state's data match or else the manually entered goal will not be approved.

Core Outcome Measure #3: Receipt of a Secondary School Diploma or GED

Definition: Learner obtains certification of attaining passing scores on the General Educational Development (GED) tests, or obtains a diploma, or state recognized equivalent, documenting satisfactory completion of secondary studies (high school or adult high school diploma).

Applicable Population: Enrolled learners who have a primary or secondary goal of passing the GED tests or obtaining a secondary school diploma and who exit during the program year.

Collection Procedure: Information on students passing the GED tests is obtained through matching data with the Arkansas GED Testing Office, Department of Career Education (501-682-1980). Local programs will be responsible for this data matching. If GED test results cannot be collected through data matching for some students, then information can also be collected through the local follow-up survey method of contacting those students. Enrolled students who take and pass the official GED in another state can be reported in AERIS with appropriate proof of GED documentation.

Reporting Procedure: Programs will use the monthly GED Reports from the GED Testing Office to match against their records of students who (1) had the primary or secondary goal of obtaining a GED, (2) had 12 or more contact hours, and (3) exited the program. After a student is separated from the program in AERIS, data entry personnel can go to the student's "Outcomes" link and manually enter the GED goal and date of achievement. This can only be accessed and reported after a student has been separated, regardless of when the GED was obtained. Achievement may be attained and recorded any time up to the state's official data entry deadline (usually September 30th). This data will be reported in NRS Table 5.

Core Outcome Measure #4: Placement in Postsecondary Education or Occupational Skills Training Program

Definition: Learner enrolls in a postsecondary education or occupational skills training program that does not duplicate other services or training received, regardless of whether the prior services or training were completed. Training programs for specific employment and/or career in a trade is acceptable as an outcome, and the training program does not have to be at the post-secondary level. However, the Workforce Alliance for Growth in the Economy™ (WAGE™) program does **not** qualify because it is a component of Arkansas Adult Education.

Applicable Population: Enrolled learners who have a primary or secondary goal of placement in postsecondary education or training and who exit during the program year.

Collection Procedure: Information on enrollment in postsecondary education or occupational skills training programs can be obtained through survey and data match from other educational and training agencies, such as job training programs, adult postsecondary education programs, and community and four-year colleges and universities. Placement is recorded any time up to the state's official data entry deadline (September 30th).

Reporting Procedure: The Arkansas Department of Career Education, Adult Education Division (ACE-AED) has a Memorandum of Understanding to share data with the Arkansas Department of Higher Education (DHE). ACE-AED will run a data match with DHE with the social security numbers of ACE-AED students who (1) had the goal of entering postsecondary education or training, (2) had 12 or more contact hours, and (3) exited the program. The data will be recorded and maintained in the Adult Education Division as aggregate numbers for each local program and the state as a whole. The matched data will now be recorded under individual student records in AERIS. This data will be combined with manually entered data (see note below) and reported in NRS Table 5.

Special Note: For students who enter post-secondary education or occupational and vocational training programs that are not included in the DHE database (e.g., private

colleges or training programs not affiliated with a state higher education institution), local programs will need to contact those students to determine if they have achieved this goal. The data needs to be entered into AERIS under the student's outcome screen after the student has been separated from the program in AERIS. The "AERIS Manual Outcome/Goal" form must be filled in by the program and submitted to the AERIS Program Analyst at the Adult Education Division for final approval. A copy of the form must also be kept in the student's file. It is the program's responsibility to prove the student's achievement will not be included in the state's data match or else the manually entered goal will not be approved. Data reporting will be available until the state's official data entry deadline (September 30th).

Do not enter individual student data about any goal achievement into AERIS for students who will be included in any of the ACE data matches with DHE or DWS. This will double count those students whose data will be matched.

Procedures for the Data Matching and Follow-Up Survey

The NRS includes four outcome measures for which data must be collected using data matching and/or follow-up surveys: entered employment, retained or improved employment, obtained a GED, and entered postsecondary education or training.

Enter and Retain/Improve Employment Goals

Since the 2005-2006 Program Year, the Adult Education Division has conducted data matches with DWS and DHE to collect data on the two employment goals and the postsecondary education goal respectively. The Adult Education Division will be responsible for coordinating the semi-annual data matching process with these two agencies. The results will be received in aggregate numbers for each local program and the state as a whole. A data base will be used to record the results and prepare the data for the annual NRS report. Local program administrators may contact the Adult Education Division to obtain information about their program's data matching results. Since the data is received in aggregate form, the individual student files in AERIS cannot be updated with student goal information.

Obtain a GED Goal

Follow-up, data matching, and data entry for the GED goal will be the responsibility of the local programs, following NRS guidelines and the guidelines set by the Arkansas Department of Career Education, Adult Education Division in this manual.

Programs must collect the information from all students who designate the GED goal as either their primary or secondary goals for attending the program. Programs that are GED test sites will receive monthly reports from the Arkansas GED Testing Office with test result information (pass/fail results). Note that these reports contain information on all students tested at a site; however, **not all students who tested are enrolled students, had the goal of GED, and separated from the program.**

Data for enrolled students who have separated, had the primary or secondary goal of obtaining the GED, and were tested (both passed and failed the GED goal achievement) should be entered in AERIS on a regular basis, and at least quarterly by the 15th of the month following each quarter.

Enter Postsecondary Education or Training Goal

Local programs will be responsible for the follow-up surveys and data entry in AERIS for students who attend postsecondary institutions or training programs **not** affiliated with the state's higher education institutions. Programs need to follow NRS guidelines and the guidelines set by the Arkansas Department of Career Education, Adult Education Division in this manual.

The following chart summarizes the time periods for collecting and reporting information on the four follow-up goals.

Student Population, Collection Times, and Reporting Times for Core Follow-Up Outcome Measures

Core Outcome Measures	Student Population to Include	Time Period to Collect Measures	Time Period to Report
<i>Entered Employment</i>	Learners* unemployed at entry, with employment goal, and who exit during the program year.	First quarter after exit quarter**	ACE-AED will data match with DWS when appropriate exit quarter data becomes available
<i>Retained Employment and Improved Employment</i>	Learners* unemployed at entry with employment goal who obtain a job during first quarter after exit; <u>and</u> learners employed at entry with a goal of retained or improved employment, and who exit during the program year.	Third quarter after exit quarter**	ACE-AED will data match with DWS when appropriate exit quarter data becomes available
<i>Receipt of secondary diploma or GED</i>	Learners* with a goal of obtaining a secondary diploma or passing the GED tests and who exit during the program year.	Any time prior to the state's reporting deadline (Sept. 30)	Report by the 15 th of the month following the month when data is received from state GED Office
<i>Placement in postsecondary education or training</i>	Learners* with a goal of entering postsecondary education or occupational training and who exit during the program year.	Any time prior to the state's reporting deadline (Sept. 30)	ACE-AED will data match with DHE for post-secondary education data. Local programs need to survey students in job training programs and other post-secondary institutions not in DHE database.

*Learners must have the goal marked in AERIS, have 12 or more contact hours in the program, exit during the program year, and be **separated** in AERIS before a goal may be counted.

**The *exit quarter* is the quarter when instruction ends, the learner terminates, or the learner has not received instruction for 90 days and is not scheduled to receive further instruction (NRS Implementation Guidelines, 2007, page 29).

ACE-AED – Department of Career Education – Adult Education Division
DWS – Department of Workforce Services
DHE – Department of Higher Education

Core Descriptive Measures

Core descriptive measures are self-reported at intake. Programs must collect the following information on ALL learners and enter the data in AERIS.

Demographic Measure #1: Race/Ethnicity

Definition: Learner's ethnic category to which the learner self-identifies, appears to belong to, or is regarded in the community as belonging. The racial/ethnic categories are:

- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- White

NEW FOR 2010: Students will have the option of choosing "Two or More Races."

Demographic Measure #2: Gender

Definition: Whether the learner is male or female.

Demographic Measure #3: Age

Definition: Learner's date of birth.

Demographic measures #1, 2, and 3 are reported in NRS Tables 1 – 3.

Student Status Measure #1: Labor Force Status

Definition: Whether the learner is employed, not employed, or not in the labor force. **All students will fall into one of these three categories:**

Employed – Learners work as paid employee in an unsubsidized job, work in their own business or farm, or who work 15 hours or more per week as unpaid workers on a farm or in a business operated by a member of the family. Also included are learners who are not currently working but who have jobs or businesses from which they are temporarily absent.

Unemployed – Learners who are not working, but are seeking employment, have made specific efforts to find a job and are available for work.

Not in the Labor Force – Learners who are not employed and not seeking employment (for example, a housewife or retiree who does not want a job or an inmate who is not eligible for parole for several years).

Collection Procedure: At intake, individual learner reports employment status. **It is very important for this information to be accurately recorded in AERIS because it is tied to the number of students who need to have employment goals. See pages 2-3 in this manual for state benchmark percentages for Enter Employment and Retain Employment goals.**

Student Status Measure #2: Public Assistance Status

Definition: Learner is receiving financial assistance from federal, state or local government agencies, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), food stamps, refugee cash assistance, old-age assistance, general assistance, and aid to the blind or totally disabled.

Social Security benefits, unemployment insurance, and employment-funded disability are not included under this definition.

Collection Procedure: At intake, referring agency or individual learner reports public assistance receipt. The information on student status measure #2 is collected on a separate form at intake that does not contain the student's name (see Status Needs form in Appendix). After the data is entered in AERIS, the sheet is removed and filed separately in a confidential folder.

Student Status Measure #3: Disability Status

Definition: Learner has a record of, or is regarded as having, any type of physical or mental impairment, including a learning disability, that substantially limits or restricts one or more major life activities, including walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, learning, or working.

Collection Procedure: At intake, referring agency or individual learner reports disability or program assesses disability. The information on student status measure #3 is collected on a separate form at intake that does not contain the student's name (see Status Needs form in Appendix). After the data is entered in AERIS, the sheet is removed and filed separately in a confidential folder.

Student Status Measure #4: Rural Residency Status

Definition: Learner who resides in a place with a population less than 2,500 and outside an urbanized area. An urbanized area includes a population of 50,000 or more in a city and adjacent areas of high density.

Collection Procedure: At intake, learner's residency in a rural area is determined by learner self-report or documentation.

Student Status Measures #1, 2, 3, and 4 are reported in NRS Table 6.

Student Status Measure #5: Learner Reasons or Goals for Attending

Definition: Learner's self-identified reasons for attending the program. Additional goals may be collected on local level:

Educational Gains – Improve basic literacy skills—improve overall basic literacy skills. Improve English skills—improve overall skills in the English language (e.g., speaking, reading, and writing). This is the assumed goal of every learner.

Obtain a job – Obtain full- or part-time paid employment.

Retain or improve current job – Upgrade skills to enable retention of current job; or obtain a job that has increased pay or benefits, higher level of responsibility, or that requires a higher level of skill, compared to current or most recent job.

Earn a GED certificate – Achieve sufficient skills to earn an Arkansas High School Diploma by passing the tests of General Educational Development.

Enter postsecondary education or job training – Achieve skills to enable enrollment in a postsecondary education program or job training program.

Collection Procedure: At intake, learner identifies goal(s) for attending the program or class within the above categories. The reasons should reflect how the learner is to be counted for core outcome measures.

All enrolled learners will be counted under Educational Gains in NRS Table 4. The state is required to meet specific goal setting averages (see pages 2-3 for details).

Core Participation Measures

Student Participation Measure #1: Contact Hours

Definition: Hours of instruction or instructional activity the learner receives from the program. Instructional activity includes any program-sponsored activity designed to promote student learning in the program curriculum such as classroom instruction, assessment, tutoring or participation in a learning lab.

Collection Procedure: Instructor or program staff will record the contact hours as they are provided. Note that time spent on assessment can be counted only if the assessment is designed to inform placement decisions, assess progress, or inform instruction. Time used to take the Official GED tests (American Council on Education, GED Testing Services) may not be counted as contact hours.

However, programs may count the time spent on taking the official GED practice tests (published by Steck-Vaughn) if the test results are used for diagnostic purposes to inform instruction.

Reporting Procedure: Hours of instruction can be dated daily or added up cumulatively in one week, but all hours need to be **dated** in AERIS on at least a **weekly basis**. Data do not need to be **entered** weekly, but all attendance and testing data need to be entered by the 15th of the following month and approved by the 22nd of the following month. This data is reported in NRS Table 4.

Student Participation Measure #2: Program Enrollment Type

Definition: Learner is enrolled in the following programs or institutions. Detailed definitions can be found in Appendix B. The following are the NRS program enrollment types:

- Adult Basic Education Program (ABE)
- Adult Secondary Education Program (ASE) –
[ASE is also known as General Adult Education (GAE)]
- English as a Second Language Program (ESL)
- Family Literacy Programs
- Workplace Literacy Programs
- Program for the Homeless
- Correctional Facilities
- Community Corrections Programs
- Other Institutional Program (any other medical or special institution)

Collection Procedure: At intake, local program counts learner as entering the appropriate NRS program or class type.

Reporting Procedure: Programs create classes in AERIS under the following “Class Types” and register students in the appropriate classes.

This information is important for NRS Tables 6, 8, 9, and 10.

AERIS Class Type Choices:

- Career Pathways
- Community Corrections
- Correctional Facilities
- Distance Ed.—Proxy Hours
- Distance Ed.—Face to Face
- EL/Civics
- Family Literacy
- KeyTrain
- No Specialized Program – (this is the most common choice)
- One Stops
- Other Institutional Settings
- Project Learner (prior written approval from ACE-AED must be granted)
- WAGE
- WorkKeys
- Workplace Literacy

Secondary Outcome Measures (Optional)

NRS does not require that states report the secondary optional outcome measures at this time. These measures include Work-based Project Learners, Employment Measures, Community Measures, Family Measures, and Student Status Measures. However, Arkansas adult education and literacy programs can collect this information and report it in AERIS (for example, under Secondary Reasons for attending adult education). ***This information is reported in NRS Tables 8 and 11.***

Student data on income level and other secondary student status measures are collected on a confidential sheet that will be separated from the student’s Intake Form after the data is entered into AERIS (see Status Needs form in Appendix). ***This information is reported in NRS Table 6.***